

DATE: May 2, 2009
TO: Members of the Board of Trustees
FROM: John Hopkins
RE: Admissions Marketing SWOT Analysis

The attached chart is the result of input gathered this spring from the offices of admissions, college relations, and institutional research, as well as from the president and cabinet. It focuses specifically on admissions marketing issues and should be seen as a subset of the larger institutional SWOT analysis currently underway.

The strengths, weaknesses, opportunities, and threats we identified have been broadly grouped under the traditional “four P” headings of product, price, promotion and place.

Cc: Cabinet

Strengths

PRODUCT

Distinctive academic program built on I.S.

I.S. = excellent prep for grad school

High quality liberal arts curriculum

Strong speech path & education programs

Weaknesses

I.S. limits ability to attract traditional transfer students

Students can't sell it effectively to prospectives

Name still says "isolation"

Demands of I.S. hurt seniors' job search

No FT pre-professional program coordinator

Technology, global focus, sustainability = not prominent in curriculum

Career services = small, under-resourced

Underutilized potential

Opportunities

I.S. has strong reputation among academics

Use alumni more to sell I.S. benefits

Sell grad school outcomes more explicitly

Leverage Center for Entrepreneurship

Threats

More competitors w/ senior capstone; I.S. = less distinctive

Global economic crisis favors jobs v. grad school

Shrinking population w/ affinity for liberal arts

Strengths

Strong music program & performance opportunities for non-majors

Strong, young faculty committed to engaging students

Strong, diverse, likable student body; M/F ratio ~ 50/50

Tradition of community service

Strong athletic program, fan support

Most academic facilities = excellent

PRICE

Significant merit & need-based aid

Weaknesses

Commitment to aiding admissions not as strong or broad

Non-academic student needs (program & facility) = historically low priority

Low faculty interest in service learning

Athletic facilities = inadequate, worn out

Some (e.g. biology) not

Not selling "Midwest discount" effectively

Opportunities

Growing student interest in service learning

Build Campus Center

Use merit aid to draw students from NE

Threats

Competitors far ahead in service learning

Competitors already far ahead

Merit aid entitlement mentality

Strengths

PROMOTION

Membership in Colleges That Change Lives

Newly refined value proposition

Weaknesses

Financial aid gapping + few full pays + high discount

US News ranking has slipped from 58 to 77

Little concrete proof of value proposition

Low nat'l & NE name recognition v. competitors

Weak presence in growing geo & demo markets

Current website

Opportunities

Financial aid follows students to off-campus programs.

Create coherent brand, clear message across web, print, events, etc.

Recruit more Asian, Asian-American students

Develop Hispanic recruiting strategy

New website, HTML e-

Threats

Competing on price w/ Witt, OWU, public "honors colleges"

Uncertain future for CTCL, post-Loren Pope

Not on radar of high-achieving students

Traditional markets contracting

Stealth applicants (30%)

Strengths

Passionate alumni

PLACE

Beautiful, well-maintained campus

Nearby transportation hubs

Proximity of Cleveland = untapped programmatic, social possibilities

Weaknesses

No significant increase in core web content team, or campus culture of distributed, quality content creation

Student housing, student center need renewal

Ohio = dullest state in U.S.

Opportunities

mail, other tools coming online

Build culture, dept. by dept.

Harness alumni enthusiasm

Residence capacity exceeds need; replicate Babcock renewal strategy

More strategic use of campus in summer

Threats

not reached by traditional DM, events

Competitors have invested heavily in dorms, student facilities